Memories,

Memories,

and Memories

Dr. Dhanpat Rai Gupta, Advocate

Centenary Memorial

Memories, Memories, and Memories

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Translated into English from the original Hindi memorial book
यादें, यादें और यादें
honoring the life of Dr. Dhanpat Rai Gupta

Prepared and translated into English by Shalini Bansal McLeod,
with the assistance of AI-based translation and editing tools, 2026.

To my respected Tauji, Shri Sukumar Chandra Bansal

Without whom we, the descendants, would not know so much of our ancestry and where we came from.

— your descendants, with eternal gratitude and love

For Samridhi (Chhavi) and Maitrie,

who never knew Babaji but somehow understood him,
and asked the questions the rest of us forgot to ask —
this translation is for you, and for those who come after you.

Translator's Note

The framing of these answers was shaped with the assistance of AI.

For Samridhi (Chhavi) and Maitrie, and for all who read this book with curiosity:

When Maitrie asked why Babaji's first language was Urdu, I realized I had never thought to ask. The answer lies in the world he was born into.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Urdu was the language of education, the courts, and cultured life across the United Provinces — what is today Uttar Pradesh. For an educated professional man of Babaji's generation, and especially for a lawyer whose work was conducted in Urdu, it was simply the natural language of learning and public life. Hindi as we know it today came later. That Babaji wrote to us grandchildren in America in Hindi shows how the world changed even within his own lifetime.

As for why Babaji's surname was Gupta while his brothers and sons carry the name Bansal — the answer is already within this book. Sukumar Tauji's chapter, 'His Ancestors, Descendants, and Close Relatives,' traces our family from Maharaja Agrasen through his son Veerbhan, founder of the Bansal *gotra* of the Agrawals. In fact, the chapter quietly shows how freely surnames moved in that generation. Of the four brothers, the younger two — Birbal Prasad and Ratan Lal — were Bansal, while Babaji was Gupta, as it seems was their eldest brother Ganpat Rai, whose son was Kailash Chandra Gupta. One family, one gotra, more than one surname. The deeper identity of a family lies not in the surname but in the gotra. They were the same family where it mattered most.

These are the questions worth asking. I am glad someone asked them.

(*Photo from the Golden Jubilee of their marriage*)

Dr. Dhanpat Rai Gupta and Smt. Prakash Vati Bansal
just a few days before passing away

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September 26, 1997

Dedicated

Your memories we cannot forget — forgetting is not possible,
Your memories are dedicated to the coming generations to cherish.
So that they too, illuminated by your light, may walk the righteous path,
draw inspiration from these memories, and carry into their lives
purity, dedication and love.

A Gift to the New Generation

Every person, whether or not they leave wealth to their descendants, inevitably leaves them the gift of their life's values and memories of days gone by — a gift more important than any estate or fortune. It is this that forms the strong foundation for the next generation, guiding them toward a happy future.

Our revered Babuji too has left behind the essence of his life — his experiences and life-stories — for present and future generations. This publication is an effort to remember him: an invaluable treasure of memory for the present, second and third generations, and a precious keepsake for generations yet to come.

Babuji's 100th birthday falls on 26 September 1997, and it is on this occasion that we present to future generations their rightful heritage — his legacy.

In this work we have received continuous support at every level from Manisha Prakashan and Shri Abhimanyu Singh Parmar. My wife Shrimati Nirmala Bansal and my brother Subodh Bansal gave timely guidance and made my task easier. How can I fully express my gratitude to them? Friends and close relations of Babuji not only sent their thoughts and reminiscences but also gave us freedom to edit them as appropriate. We are grateful to all of them.

A gift is priceless. No price has been placed on this one — nor could there be.

— Sukumar Bansal

Akhil Bharatiya Vaishya Agrawal Rajvansh Sabha

(*Registered*)

President
Poorna Chand Gupta
14/6, Bagh Keshodas, Arya Puri, Muzaffarnagar – Phone: 0131-405787

Message

It is with great pleasure that I have learned that a commemorative volume is being published to mark the 100th birthday of Dr. Dhanpat Rai Gupta, Advocate, Meerut, on 26 September 1997.

The late Dr. Dhanpat Rai Gupta was a dedicated soul, born into the Bhediya family of Lawad village. He rendered selfless service to the Rajvansh community and the citizens of Meerut — most notably as a free homeopathic physician — for an uninterrupted 60 years. Remembering him on his 100th birth anniversary is entirely commendable. When he engaged himself in service of the Rajvansh community, he was elected General Secretary of the Akhil Bharatiya Vaishya Agrawal Rajvansh Sabha in 1940. He also helped establish a code of conduct to limit wedding expenditure, and at his own son's wedding returned the gold guinea and accepted just one and a quarter rupee. He was an ideal man and a servant of society. The Rajvansh community will always remember him.

Poorna Chand Gupta
President

Floral Tribute to Revered Bhai Saheb

— Dr. O.P. Goyal

Revered Bhai Saheb — Dhanpat Rai ji — was my maternal cousin. From childhood I used to visit him with my mother at my maternal grandmother's home. My grandmother lived in Lawad, so whenever I came to Lawad and he was there, we would meet. He usually lived in Meerut in a large haveli in Jattiwada. His elder brother Master Ganpat Rai ji also lived there. Bhai Saheb was slim and very agile — he walked at quite a brisk pace.

Bhai Saheb was well known for his temper. When we were at home and Bhai Saheb returned from court, my mother would say to me: 'Dhannu has come, don't cause trouble now.' Even his dharma-patni (my Bhabhi) was a little afraid of him. He was a very orderly person — everything had to be in its proper place.

Revered Bhai Saheb was very fond of me. When I grew up and became a doctor, he would call me 'Doctor Saheb' and be very pleased. Each morning before going to court he would sit in his drawing room and see patients. He had excellent knowledge of homeopathy; a large number of patients came and many were cured. All medicines were given free. In the evenings he would even visit patients' homes — all free service. I believe this was the fruit of his pious work, for all children in his family grew up well-educated and attained very good positions. He was never greedy for money. He also served as both Secretary and Treasurer of the Rajvansh community. Such was our revered Bhai Saheb. With these words I offer my floral tribute on his 100th birth anniversary.

316/7, Thapar Nagar, Meerut – PIN 250001

Memories, Memories and Memories

— Sukumar Bansal

Nearly 100 years ago, on 26 September 1898, an exceptionally diligent person was born in Lawad village in Meerut district — a man who thought far ahead of his time and who rendered selfless service to the Rajvansh community and the citizens of Meerut in various ways, most notably as a free homeopathic physician. It is entirely fitting to remember him on his 100th birthday.

His parents, Shri Sagramal and mother Souharda, named him Dhanpat Rai. His father was a well-known wrestler in the village, and for some reason their family was called the 'Bhediya family' (wolf family). It is said that these people would make wolf-like sounds at night to ward off thieves and dacoits — hence this name was given to the family.

Despite being born into a landowning family, he had an indomitable desire for education and public service. In those times it was generally considered unnecessary for other zamindar families to pursue higher education, but he obtained B.A. and LL.B. degrees from Allahabad University and took up the legal profession.

But fate had also ordained that he serve as a physician. In 1927 he obtained the highest homeopathic degree, 'Doctor of Homeopathic Medicine (M.D.H.)'. Later he was granted the title M.C.H.L. (Member, Central Homeopathic League). Thus he became by profession a lawyer, and for public service a free homeopathic physician. For more than 60 years he healed countless patients and provided free consultations and medicines. Patients came from far and wide, and he was credited with curing even grave illnesses such as cancer.

To carry out this work he came to reside in the vast haveli of his maternal grandfather, Shri Jwala Prasad Ziledar in the Jattiwada locality of Meerut, where for more than 60 years he continued both his professions. But when the time came, he abandoned that dwelling without hesitation and moved through rented accommodations.

In the 1930s he showed great foresight and opened three cinema halls simultaneously in Meerut, where silent films and talkies were screened — Alamara, Naadira, Amrit-Manthan, Padosi and others. Since then this business has flourished greatly. But the irony was that its very pioneer, who had poured everything into this venture, was himself ruined — the reason being a betrayal by one of his associates. He trusted people again and again and suffered betrayal repeatedly, yet he himself never betrayed anyone.

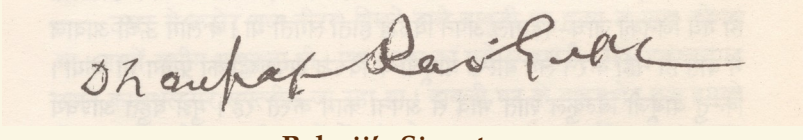
This painful turn of events did not discourage him. He changed direction and devoted himself to the service of the Vaishya Agrawal Rajvansh community. In 1941 he was elected General Secretary of the Akhil Bharatiya Vaishya Agrawal Rajvansh Sabha, with Dr. Suraj Bal as President. He turned his attention to extravagant

spending at weddings. A code of conduct — a 'Dastoor-ul-Amal' — was adopted but was not followed in practice. The writer of these lines recalls that eleven years later, at his own wedding, the gold guinea was duly returned and one and a quarter rupees accepted, as prescribed.

His credibility as a lawyer was beyond doubt — perhaps for this reason he was frequently sent by various courts to conduct on-site inspections. In one such case a plaintiff attempted to offer him money — he sternly rebuked him and sent him away. Another Muslim plaintiff, after winning his case, offered milk, sugar, rice and other ingredients for kheer, saying: 'You may not eat kheer made at my home, so I have brought all the ingredients separately.' That too was refused. Such was his integrity.

Seeing his social service and popularity, efforts were made several times to put him forward in municipal elections. But he refused to be trapped in party politics and continued to serve in his own way.

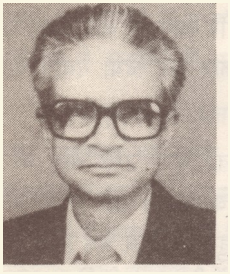
On 10 June 1979 he was compelled to leave his beloved city of Meerut. According to doctors he had prostate cancer, and for proper care he moved to Dehradun. He left Meerut with tears in his eyes and grief in his heart. On 26 April 1980 he passed away in Dehradun, and the local Meerut newspaper Prabhat expressed its sorrow — that at the end he was not in Meerut, to which he had devoted his entire life. The Rajvansh Sabha Dehradun passed a condolence resolution, published in the November–December 1980 issue of Samaj Jyoti. His memories, memories, only memories remain.



Babuji's Signature

My Babuji

— Rajendra Bansal



Our Babuji was a man of extraordinary and remarkable character. Not that he was great in a heroic or divine sense — he had some excellent qualities and some human weaknesses too. Whatever he had, it was of the finest kind. In truth, he was different from the ordinary person. As I recall Babuji's way of life, the images that rise to mind are chiefly those of his distinctive qualities. His ordinary shortcomings were complementary to those qualities.

Babuji's angry nature was known to all the family and acquaintances. His elder and younger brothers, his mother, and all family members felt hesitant to speak with him. One had to speak to him thoughtfully. Babuji spoke very briefly, in measured words. I recall many occasions when his inner anger was fearsome — like thunder and lightning within. On one occasion he nearly fainted while shouting in anger.

What is remarkable is that even while in the grip of such terrible anger, Babuji could also be completely calm. As a lawyer he often had to go to disputed sites to conduct surveys. On one such occasion I went with him. One party became agitated and used abusive language against Babuji. Yet Babuji continued his work in complete calm. On the way back I asked: 'How did you endure their abuse?' Babuji said: 'I am calmest in hottest moments.' He explained that he knew those people wanted to provoke him into a quarrel so the survey would be halted. His wisdom remained alert even when he was angry. He was master of his own emotions.

As the eldest son I had the good fortune of being closest to him. His anger fell on all the family — except my grandmother and me. I clearly remember that he never raised his voice with his mother, never got angry with her. Whenever my mother wanted something special done, she would have me convey it, knowing Babuji would not be displeased with me. Whatever I asked, he would listen calmly and act on it at once if he thought it right.

A pain that has stayed with me all my life is that, for all the love Babuji gave me, I could not serve him in return. All of us brothers would gather at the Meerut house during the summer holidays. Whenever Babuji returned from court, he never came home empty-handed. His affectionate gaze rested on every member of the

household. Once he noticed me walking instead of cycling and asked why. I said the bicycle had no lock and no stand. That very day he had both fitted and without a word placed the key in my hand. Letters written by my son and daughter were found safely preserved in his box after his death. Such was Babuji's extraordinary paternal love — boundless in its depth.

Though outwardly stern and austere-looking, Babuji's heart was extraordinarily tender. He had immense feeling within. I recall one incident. I was going to Muzaffarnagar to my place of work, with my wife. Babuji came to see us off at the gate. There were tears in his eyes. We were surprised when, as we sat in the train at the station, we saw Babuji arriving with Ammaji. Ammaji told us — after we left, he became very restless, and his eyes would not stop streaming. That is why, to calm him, he had to be brought all the way to the station.

I came to know that on the morning of his passing Babuji had said: Raje is very far away. Well, wherever he may be, from my heart I wish him well.' Babuji, who had cured hundreds of thousands of patients with his homeopathic medicines, had himself to endure great bodily suffering in his final days. Such is the irony of fate.

After Babuji's death I came upon some Urdu couplets written in his own hand, reflecting his nature. I brought them away and had them translated into Hindi by a student well versed in Urdu. That priceless treasure is still with me. Those couplets throw ample light on Babuji's philosophy of life and his feelings. Perhaps none of us brothers knew anything of those sentiments of Babuji's younger days.

Madhuvan

Subhash Marg, Rani ka Bag,
Chandausi – 202412

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A Few of Babuji's Favourite Couplets

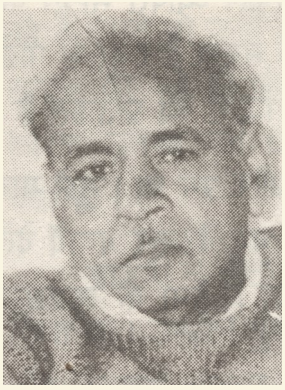
What has love ever understood, what has beauty ever known —
we who sit in the dust are the world's own stumbling-stone.

A single word of love is the tale of one who is humble —
drawn inward, it is the lover's heart; spread out, it is the whole world.

A faint moistness in the eyes, he sits there silent and still —
in those delicate glances rests a delicate world.

Babuji's Anger Was Love Too

— Sukumar Bansal



There is a very beautiful maxim: 'And anger falls only upon the one with whom there is some bond.' There can be no anger without cause or foundation. The one upon whom anger is directed must share some relationship. Such was Babuji's anger, which everyone saw in its outward form. That behind that anger lay compassion and love — only the one who knows the inner heart could tell.

Babuji was often anxious about me. He felt that I had more sentiment than practical sense. He used to say: 'What will this Sukumar do on the harsh ground of life?' It was my nature to make hasty decisions carelessly, and for that reason I was always a cause of worry in the family. Babuji's anxiety was natural.

In those days I was actively involved in the national movement, while in tradition-bound families this was branded as 'vagrancy.' I would often return home at eleven at night. Babuji would stay awake, waiting for me. He could not sleep until everyone in the family was home. In the middle of my M.A. examinations (in which I missed a first division by four marks) I was leading a workers' strike in Modinagar. Although I had scored the highest marks in English literature at the B.A. level, I took economics for my M.A. — in which I scored the least — simply because all my friends were taking economics. Such were my reckless decisions. Babuji was right to worry about me. Today I can say that the sudden decisions I made always turned out in my favour. Not a single throw of the dice went against me. This was possible, I firmly believe, because of revered Babuji's concern and his love for me.

Now that I have reached the evening of my life, even though deprived of material attainments, I am content. I do not own a single yard of land, nor even one brick of my own. Even so, I am not prepared to count myself as failure. With whatever I have, I am satisfied; there is peace in it. Behind this lie Babuji's blessing, his guidance, and the fruit of his way of life.

Babuji had great attachment and love for everyone in his family. I remember that whenever anyone fell physically ill, he would sit through the whole night giving medicines. He would have no rest. At such times he forgot everything — going to court, attending to the cinema business, all of it.

I always saw Babuji immersed in work. In his youth he had taken on the responsibility of three great undertakings at once. Morning and evening he gave patients free medicine and even visited them at home. His day passed in legal practice at court, and from evening until twelve at night his time was spent at the three cinema houses he ran. To run three cinema houses with no prior knowledge of the trade was possible only for a man of Babuji's grit. Every day he distributed medicine at seven in the morning and returned home after midnight when the cinema shows ended. By then we children were asleep. Sometimes for weeks together we longed just to speak with him. The blessing of Babuji's love still reached us all unfailingly on our way to school — from the pocket of his coat, which was always full of dried fruit. Babuji kept up such a laborious routine for years. Indirectly, it was a lesson for us all.

Babuji had no addiction of any kind. Yes, in his youth he had been fond of cigarettes. But once, seeing me blow cigarette smoke, he gave up smoking altogether. Stopping all at once from a chain-smoking habit had an adverse effect on Babuji's body. To the end he endured stomach ailments, yet his firm resolve never wavered.

Babuji had a part in getting the Rajvansh community to adopt a code of conduct (dastur-ul-amal). He wished it to be followed honestly in society. Lavish spending and the display of wealth on marriage occasions pained him. He was against these social ills. Whenever he saw these evils among the so-called pillars of society in the Rajvansh community, it caused him heartfelt distress. With a sorrowful heart Babuji would say: 'When the very roots of society are hollow, what will the keeper of that tree do?' Out of disappointment his mind gradually grew indifferent toward the community's activities.

Babuji built his life by gathering it together bit by bit upon the ruins of the generation before him. He laboured tirelessly in his youth. He never compromised his devotion, honesty, and spirit of selfless service for the sake of material gain — not even at the time he was betrayed. The three cinema houses he ran slipped from his hands through the cunning of his friend and partner. His income from the legal profession also declined. Even so, Babuji went on distributing free homeopathic medicines to more than a hundred patients every day, just as before. From this selfless work he drew inner contentment. He successfully treated incurable diseases such as cancer and diabetes. In Meerut he was known as the 'Doctor Lawyer.'

This is one of the mysteries of existence that will forever remain a mystery. Some enlightened great souls have known it, yet could not put it into words. That is why it is called the irony of fate. The

same happened with Babuji. He who removed the physical suffering of thousands of patients had to pass more than ten months of his final days in extreme bodily pain. A catheter was permanently fixed in his abdomen, through which urine drained into a bag. A man who had never bowed in his life, never tired, was now forced to live in the wretchedness of a body tethered to a catheter tube. At last, on 26 April 1980, Babuji left his body and set out on his great journey.

The inheritance I received from Babuji may not be wealth, but the purity of life, love toward all, hard work, ceaseless self-study, and a life free of all addiction — that inheritance he gave me has been the foundation of my present. Babuji's life-mantra was: 'The home whose atmosphere is good — every child of that home is good.' It is because of the atmosphere Babuji gave the whole family that the generation after him has flourished and is content. That the light of that great tradition should go on guiding the generations to come — this surely is the wish of departed Babuji's soul. And the firm resolve of future generations to live by it will be their supreme sacred duty, and a true tribute to themselves and to revered Babuji.

Purana Qila,

Near Railway Crossing
Lucknow – 226001

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I Am an Admirer of Revered Chachaji's Homeopathic Knowledge

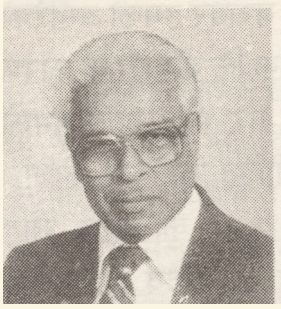
I am an admirer of revered Chachaji's homeopathic skill. In 1951 I developed appendicitis (Appendix), which grew so severe that the doctor had even fixed a date for my admission for surgery. When revered Chachaji learned of it, he came to Delhi himself together with my revered father and gave me a single dose of his medicine. He said the second dose should be given three months later. With these two doses I was spared the operation, and to this day the appendix has never troubled me. I was saved from this illness, which is considered a difficult one.

Kailash Chandra Gupta,

19 B, Sarvodaya Enclave,
New Delhi

Such Was Our Babuji

— Sushil Bansal



What our Babuji was like is not easy to describe in words. Babuji still dwells in our hearts, in our body and mind. When he 'is,' how can he be spoken of as one who 'was'? For us our Babuji is an example, an ideal.

Of my four brothers, I am the one who spent the most time with Babuji. I have seen his principles, his ideals, his courage, and his spirit of service to others at close hand. Yes, I have also seen and understood some of his shortcomings. Babuji's life was spent more in service to others than in self-interest. In selfless service he found spiritual joy. He never let his personal and family troubles get in the way of his work of serving others.

Most of Babuji's time was spent giving free homeopathic treatment. He did this with great concentration. There was renown in his hands, and his medicines worked like magic. People of every class in Meerut came to him to regain their health. He cured even incurable patients, such as those with cancer. At any hour, day or night, Babuji would go even to the home of a seriously ill patient to see him.

Babuji's memory was astonishing. He could recall the ordinary events of his life from childhood through his school and college days, in full detail. When the family sat together, he took great delight in recounting those events.

Babuji had boundless love for everyone in the family. I lived with him for years, so I, my wife, and my children had the good fortune of receiving his affection. Whenever Ammaji made a plan to go out somewhere, he would put it off on some pretext. Babuji especially loved being among the whole, full family. When I went to Bareilly for work, Babuji came to me many times. He would enquire about our comfort and well-being. He never revealed his own problems and troubles.

It was only in September 1977, when I went to America with my family, that we were parted from Babuji. Although Babuji's first language was Urdu and he knew little Hindi, he always wrote to us in Hindi. He kept writing to us in America to learn of our welfare — until his illness made him unable to. Even when gravely ill, he had written to us that he would try to stay alive until we returned to India. But that was not to be. He left his body on 26 April 1980. Babuji is no longer with us in body, but his sweet memories will remain with us always. We will go on remembering him — such was our Babuji.

6106 Walnut Street

Temple Hills
MD 20748
U.S.A.

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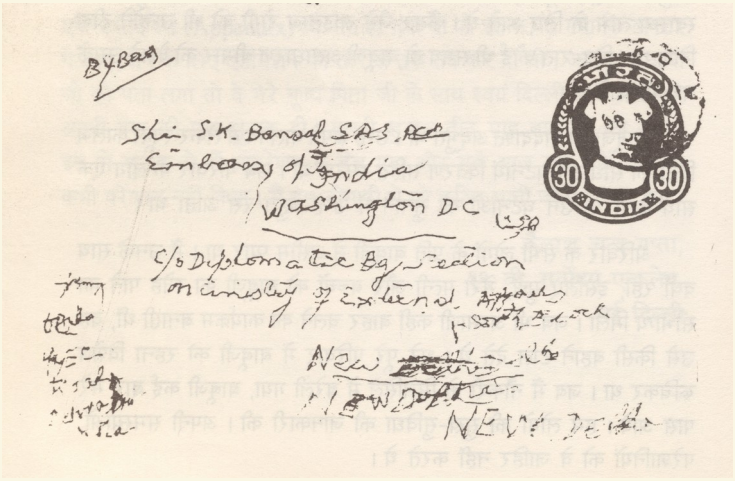
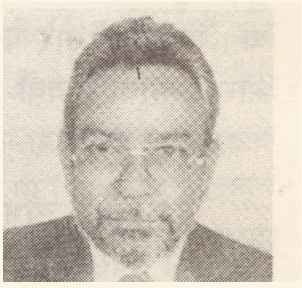
Babuji's Handwriting, Written with Trembling Hands in the Last Hours of His Life



Painful Memories of Babuji's Last Days

— Subodh Bansal



Being the youngest of the brothers, it was my good fortune to receive Babuji's special affection and love. Even when I was perhaps ten or eleven years old, he would have me sleep beside him. What days those were! And yet the painful memories of Babuji's last days still bring tears to my eyes today.

Babuji's life was spent in hard labour and struggle. After the abolition of the zamindari, he and his generation had to bear the change of taking up a business or a job to make a living. Such upheavals come only once in centuries. And so Babuji's life was spent facing hardship, struggle, and challenges, both physically and mentally. First he had to find his feet, become capable, and then toil day and night to support a growing family. Babuji was a witness to the tragedy of the country's Partition and to social change. To come through all these storms and keep his footing was not easy. It takes great courage and strength. Babuji passed through such times.

In April 1979, when he came to Dehradun for the housewarming of the home I had built there, he was in great pain from his prostate. He did not let us sense his physical suffering. He was anxious that the happy occasion not be needlessly spoiled. Soon after he returned from Dehradun to Meerut, Babuji's health worsened. He had to undergo surgery at once. As soon as I got word, my family and I devoted ourselves to nursing him. It is the irony of fate that he had successfully treated such cases with homeopathic medicines — prostate patients had been cured without any operation. What a tragedy that Babuji himself had to undergo surgery, and that, with cancer suspected, the prostate could not be cut away and removed. The incision was simply stitched up, and a catheter was permanently inserted to drain his urine.

Babuji was of such grit that until the age of eighty he kept riding his old Armstrong bicycle. How helpless Babuji had become, walking while holding the bag tied to the tube hanging from his abdomen. To live in Meerut in such helplessness was painful. So he had to come to me in Dehradun. The Meerut household that Babuji and Ammaji had built up over the years had to be broken up. A great deal was sold off to the junk-dealer. With his personal belongings he came to my 'home.'

It was our good fortune that we had the chance to nurse and serve him until the very end. Whatever better treatment was available was given. Babuji's condition only worsened. During this time, besides local acquaintances, many relatives came to see him. Some homeopathic physicians came to consult him, and they said

that they had learned priceless prescriptions from Babuji which proved successful on their patients. Such medical knowledge comes not from any book but from experience.

When Babuji groaned with unbearable pain, we were shaken to the core. The man who had never caused anyone pain, who had relieved the suffering of thousands, had to endure such bodily torment. We would wonder: why must Babuji bear so much suffering? Is this the justice of the Maker? At times our faith in the divine power wavered. But who has ever escaped the wheel of destiny? Before the end, Babuji slipped into a coma and was freed from the terrible pain of cancer. It seemed as though he had never had so painful a disease as cancer at all. Such was his state.

On the day of Babuji's passing, my aunt's sons had come. As they were leaving, Babuji even gave a clear reply to their farewell greeting. Nirmala Bhabiji and I had just stepped back inside after seeing Krishna Bhai Saheb off, when Babuji's life-breath took wing. The swan departs alone. Helpless, powerless, as if cheated, we could only watch this supreme truth of destiny.

44 East Canal Road,

Dehradun – 248001

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I Received Much Affection from Babuji

— Nirmala Bansal

I still remember that singular day of my life. On 26 June 1951 Babuji, together with his two brothers and sons, brought me away as the new daughter-in-law of the family. I had been married to his son Sukumar. Through Babuji's affectionate manner, in a single moment that new home began to feel like my own.

In my husband's home, after breakfast and meals everyone was offered fennel, cardamom, and betel-nut. Each time, after serving everyone, I would take a little betel-nut and set it aside. Babuji must have noticed this. He must have thought I was fond of betel-nut. Only a day or two later, Babuji came straight to my room on returning from the courts. He took one or two packets of betel-nut from his pocket and gave them to me. He said: 'Beti, you are very fond of this.' In those days a new bride did not speak with her elders. I too stayed silent. I touched his feet. He gave me his blessing and left. I was drenched in Babuji's heartfelt affection. That moment still fills me with joy today.

On the occasion of Diwali, Babuji would lay out heaps of fireworks. He would bring whatever each person liked. I was fond of setting off spinning wheels (charkhi), so he brought me boxes upon boxes of them.

Only four or five months had passed in my husband's home after my marriage when, during the Dussehra holidays, my mother-in-law, both younger brothers-in-law, and my elder brother- and sister-in-law went off to Chandausi. Thinking that I might have difficulty in the kitchen, Babuji brought home provisions, spices, and the like. Stern on the outside, Babuji was also playful. In a most natural manner he said: 'Beti, in our house the red chili and turmeric are ground by pounding (dhok kar).' I was puzzled how this could be done. I went straight to my aunt-in-law and asked. She told me Babuji had said this only to make me laugh. Only then was I relieved. Babuji paid close attention to my every concern and attended to it at once.

During his fatal illness, Babuji was at my younger brother-in-law's home in Dehradun. As it happened, we were in Haridwar, so I had frequent chances to come and see him. A few days before Babuji's passing I had reached Dehradun. At one in the afternoon on 26 April 1980, Babuji parted from us all. There are so many memories of him that seem to have happened only a moment ago. We will always remember him. In remembering one's own beloved, one's own dear ones, words fall short. Whatever is written seems too little. Babuji can only be remembered in the inmost heart, and at such moments the eyes shimmer with tears.

Through Sukumar Bansal

Purana Qila, Near Railway Crossing,
Lucknow – 226001

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His Manner Drew People Close

We remember Babu Dhanpat Rai ji very often. His manner was such that it drew people to him of their own accord and brought them close.

Vireshwar Tyagi
Former Member of the Legislative Assembly
National Secretary, Hind Mazdoor Sabha

1, Kantkunj, Saket
Meerut

For Babuji We Were Both Daughters-in-Law and Daughters

— Saroj Bansal

When I came into the family as a daughter-in-law, I received from Babuji the love given to both a daughter-in-law and a daughter. We four daughters-in-law kept only a modest, respectful veil before our Babuji. We felt no hesitation in speaking with him, comfortably yet with respect. On occasions like Diwali we even played cards with him. Often, when we all sat together, Babuji would tell us interesting incidents from his childhood and early life. At such times we were all delighted, and we learned something too.

I remained in the shelter of Babuji's affection for twenty years, and it was only in 1977, when I came to America, that we were parted from him. Two years later, when Babuji fell gravely ill, only my husband was able to come from America to see him. I did not have the good fortune of a last meeting with him. Even so, only a few days before his death Babuji spoke into a cassette and sent me his love and a message. Hearing it, I still refresh my memory of him. My children too received Babuji's affection, and they remember him as well. On Babuji's hundredth birth anniversary, we all offer him our heartfelt tribute.

Through Sushil Bansal

6106 Walnut Street
Temple Hills, MD 20748
U.S.A.

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Babuji — My Father-in-Law: My Father

— Chitra Bansal

Perhaps because I was the youngest daughter-in-law, I received from Babuji even more love than a father gives, and I never felt that I had come into some unfamiliar environment. I had heard that he was of an angry temperament, but I personally never once experienced this. Yes, he treated all his children with very great love and affection; whenever we went to him, how much he cared for us all. Whenever we went out somewhere and were a little late returning, on coming back I would find him waiting outside for us. In that waiting there was concern, not anger of any kind.

Our elder son Sameer was born in Meerut, right there at his home. At that time he left no stone unturned in caring for me. Again and again he would ask Ammaji about me. With great fondness he performed this grandson's naming ceremony.

The chance to grow closer to him and understand him fully came in 1979, when he came here for treatment. To see so active and energetic a person in that helpless condition pained me deeply within. We all cared for him on that occasion, but at his final time I, and both my sons, had to go to Moradabad — a regret that remains in my heart even today.

Through Subodh Bansal

44, East Canal Road,
Dehradun

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My Baba

— Chitra Dayal

To remember my Baba on his birth centenary and write or say something is not difficult, yet not at all easy either. In truth we keep him in our hearts at every moment, but to say something about one from whom we received so very much love feels like trying to measure that love. It seems to me that every child's 'Baba' loves them just as much as my Baba, Shri Dhanpat Rai ji, loved us. In his love we children became oblivious even to the presence of our own parents. The importance of discipline in life, and of complete skill in one's work, I learned from him.

I still remember today when I had learned to make roti, and when I made it for the first time and fed it to him, he gave me a reward with great love. Even while remaining busy all day, he would take us to the park every day, play with us, talk with us, and most of all fulfil our every silly, stubborn demand with a smile — all of this I still remember very much.

Through Dineshwar Dayal

16 U.P.S.I.D.C.
Nawabganj, Kanpur

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Babaji's Honesty Was Unshakeable

— Neeraj Bansal

In those days, while studying in the eleventh and twelfth grades and staying in Meerut, I got the chance to live with Babaji. The impression Babaji made on my adolescent mind at that time is clear even after so long an interval.

Babaji was a lawyer by profession and practised free homeopathic treatment as a hobby. He did both these tasks with full concentration. By temperament he would grow angry in an instant, yet at heart he was extremely gentle. From five in the morning until twelve at night his schedule was one of continuous activity. It was precisely because he was intensely hardworking and fully disciplined that he could not tolerate slackness or evasion in any work. He always went to the courts by bicycle, and Babaji did not give up cycling until the last days of his life. Luxury and show irritated him. I was the eldest grandson in the house. I do not recall his ever scolding me even slightly.

Babaji's honesty was unshakeable. For him, truth and honesty were not merely a good thing but a philosophy of life. On Sundays he would often go, by order of the court, to measure and survey the disputed land of tenant farmers. One Sunday morning a man came with a good deal of money and, presenting it before Babaji, urged him to write the report in his favour. Babaji's brow tightened. He rebuked the man. The man thought perhaps he had offered too little money, and took out some more from his pocket. That was it — it was as if a bomb went off. Babaji flew into a rage and all but shoved the man out of the house. The man was thoroughly frightened, and became convinced that the lawyer Saheb would now give the report against him, which would cause him great loss.

Anyway, the measurement was done. Babaji gave a just report, which happened to be in that man's favour. When the man learned this at the court, he could not believe his eyes. One evening he came with a box of sweets and, begging Babaji's forgiveness, said: 'Vakil Saheb, I had misjudged you.' He bowed at Babaji's feet. Babaji said: 'This is the side of justice, and a matter of your fortune. I did only what was right.' Then Babaji added: 'Feed these sweets to your children. Consider that I have accepted them.' Babuji was rich in his integrity and his devotion to principle. From this incident my adolescent mind received a pure inspiration, and who knows — perhaps my whole philosophy of life took its direction from this very event. In Babaji's memory, my reverent salutations, again and again.

40 Manshaiya Colony

21 Phatak
Patiala

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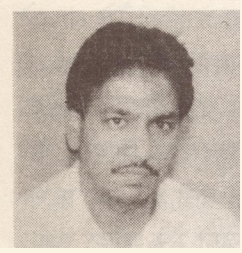
Babuji's Life Was in Keeping with the Following Maxim of Vishnu Prabhakar

'After all, the human being is but one and has one sole ideal — to live for others. If one can advance even a little in this direction, it will be a very great thing. What we know is very little; what we do not know is very much. Therefore, our aim should be only to keep on knowing.'

What Was in Him Is in No One Else

— Navneet Bansal



That paper boat... that rainwater... and so much else is bound up with the memories of my childhood... there is the almond milk fried by our great-grandmother's hand... there are the sacks of mangoes that came to our maternal grandparents' house, which we ate by the bucketful... and the blue shirt my elder brother bought me for the first time with his own pocket money, about thirty years ago now — I remember it even today... and there is our Babaji, whose name was Dr. Dhanpat Rai Gupta....

There was surely something special in this personality... I still remember how, when he searched and searched for some little child hidden at my side and then tickled them hard, and how in his sitting room — where he distributed his homeopathic medicines — there was fixed a great big cloth fan that moved by pulling a cord. As soon as evening came, I would wait for him to sit quickly in his room so that I could pull the cord and fan him, while keeping my eye on the water bottles and the little phials used for mixing the medicines. The moment he sat down a crowd of medicine-seekers would gather, and I stayed eager to fill water into his bottles. I must have been only seven or eight then... When Papa went on tour I would ask Mummy, 'Has Papa gone on tour, or on a round?' There is also a faint glimpse of my elder brother's accident, when he fell from the third floor in Rampur; this accident frightened me so much that Babaji kept me with him at all times.

There must surely have been something special in Babaji, since every Diwali I would say to my parents, 'Let us go to Babaji in Meerut.' The finest Diwalis of my life were spent with him; he would bring so many fireworks and hide them away, and we would think the fireworks were finished — but no, that was never so. Sometimes from behind the flowerpots, sometimes from under the bed, from who knows where, he would pull out fireworks.

At night everyone — Tauji-Taiji, Chacha-Chachi, Papa and Mummy — would play cards and sleep late into the morning; then Babaji would call out to Dadiji: 'Hey, go and wake these gamblers now!'

Speaking of calling out reminds me... when Babaji was ill at Subodh Chacha ji's place in Dehradun, and Sushil Chacha had come from America and was taping his voice, out of curiosity I asked him, 'Babaji, tell me — why is our family called the family of wolves?' He told me his grandfather's story: 'In Lawad village, where we lived, when he called out early in the morning the whole village would wake in fear. People used to say that there was such terror in his voice, like the coming of a wolf; and from then on our family came to be called the family of wolves.'

He had great pride in his ancestors, whose values he often spoke of, and we are proud of our Babaji too, from whom we have received those values. People often say that my temper takes after my Baba — but when did he ever get angry? Only when he did not get his tea or food on time, or when some client or patient came to him at an odd hour, or when his roti was late in coming while he ate.

I can forget all the memories of my childhood once... that paper boat... that rainwater... but I cannot forget my Babaji, and these very special qualities of his that set him apart from ordinary people.

What was in him is in no one else.

Through Sukumar Bansal

Purana Qila, Railway Crossing
Lucknow – 226001

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Baba, Pillar of Our Family

— *Shalini* (*Gudya*)

Most of the memories of my childhood are memories of my Babaji. His leading me by the finger as we walked, seating me beside him and teaching me arithmetic tables, cycling behind my school rickshaw all the way to school, bringing samosas to school when an examination ran late, hiding and crying in his lap, laying out a never-ending heap of fireworks at Diwali — and most of all, his boundless love — I remember it all. Even today, whenever any trouble comes upon me, I feel that if Babaji were here he would set everything right. He was such a shield that, while he was there, everything felt safe. He was my heart, and so as long as I live he too will always be with me.

When I was little and slept beside Babaji, often on waking I would look to see whether he was all right. I could not even imagine living without him. It seems like only yesterday when, at the time of our coming to America, he held me with one hand and Shailu with the other and brought us down to the car. His words still echo in my ears, the ones he spoke peering in through the window: 'Beti, do not forget Baba.' In the beginning his letters came every day. I do not know how he bore living without us.

Once I had gone with Geeta Buaji to her college and we were delayed. Babaji cycled all over Meerut searching for me. When word came of our going to America, we were in Mawana. The state in which I saw Babaji on our return I can never forget. Sitting in his chair he looked so weak and sad, as though he had lost everything.

I never remember him being ill, but in his final days he had to endure great suffering. I do not know why this happened to him. He had helped everyone so much. Because of his homeopathy practice, a great many people knew him. Even today he must be alive in the memories of many. Two years on, when I was there, someone asked me whether I was the lawyer Saheb's granddaughter — and that made me very happy. My greatest regret is this: that Babaji and Ammaji gave me so much love, but by the time I became capable of doing something, they had already gone far away. I read Babaji's last letters and remember him.

8115, Madan Terrace, Greenbelt

MD 20770
U.S.A.

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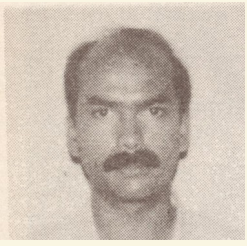
Babuji with his four sons

My Babaji's Miracle

— Sameer



Papa tells me that when my name was being chosen, Babaji — who understood Urdu words better — said, 'What is this Muslim-style name like Bashir or Rafiq that you have given?' Anyway, little by little he had no difficulty in pronouncing my name. He began lovingly calling me 'Summy,' but this name did not catch on much, and I came to be known by the name Sameer.

In my childhood, whenever I went with Papa Mummy to him in Meerut, he took great care of me and gave me love. During his illness, all of us, according to our ability, began to nurse and serve him with heart and soul. Sometimes, when Papa could not, I would seat him on a scooter and take him to the doctor for treatment, which gave me great mental satisfaction — that I too had become capable of doing something for him.

One miracle of his homeopathic treatment happened to me as well. On a pimple on one of my cheeks, I had applied Dettol without mixing water, which left a good-sized mark on my skin, and which the doctors said could only be treated by plastic surgery. He gave me medicine to take only once or twice, by which that mark vanished completely — so much so that other doctors are not easily prepared to believe this miracle. But a miracle it certainly was.

Through Subodh Bansal

44, East Canal Road
Dehradun – 248001

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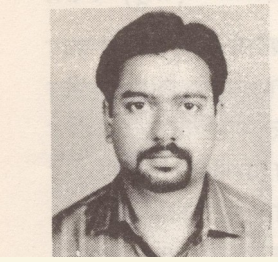
I Had to Console My Heart

— Sangeet



Being much younger than my elder brother, I do not remember many recollections of Babaji, but whenever he came to Dehradun, he would stay close by me and play with me.

One memory of his that I can never forget is this: once, while playing alone, I pushed a small stone up my nose, and when it began to trouble me, I went to him crying. With such love, and without causing me any pain, he took that stone out and then applied medicine.

To shorten my name, 'Sangeet' had become 'Geet,' and 'Geet' became 'Geetu,' and I liked it very much when Babaji called me by this name. In fact, a select few people, like my elder brother, still call me by this very name even now.

Once, when Papa took him to the doctor, I was there too, and in that pitiful, heart-touching voice he asked the doctor whether he might live one more year, until the children came back from America. For a moment it struck me like a blow, but I quickly consoled my heart. I had to console it.

Through Subodh Bansal

44, East Canal Road
Dehradun – 248001

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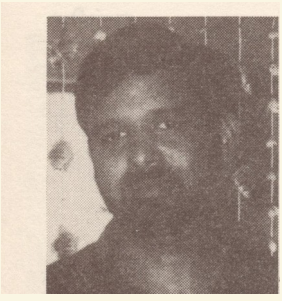
To Leave India Was to Bid Farewell to Baba

— Ashish (Shailu) Bansal



Babaji was a very thoughtful man and one who helped others. By profession he was a lawyer, but more than that he was a man who loved home and household life. His greatest passion was homeopathy, of which he had a thorough knowledge, and he gave people free advice and medicine. He had another hobby too — gardening. He loved trees and plants and cared for them. Because of his profession and his interests, the number of his acquaintances and friends was very large, but I do not recall his ever spending much time with anyone.

I remember that I often used to sleep beside him and read the newspaper in the morning. During my illness of nearly a year, it was he who cared for me day and night. I believe my illness was cured by his very love, his effort, and his knowledge of medicines.

When leaving India, I remember, we were both consoling each other. I could see the pain in his heart, but I was not able to understand his feelings. Some years later, when I heard the news that Babaji was no longer with us, then I realized and understood that at that time he had believed that conversation and meeting of ours would truly be our last conversation and our last meeting.

Through Sushil Bansal

U.S.A.

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Babaji's Blessing from the Heavens

— Rekha Bansal, Kokil Bansal

'Those who go away keep coming back. The memory of those who depart never fades.'

And so Babaji too, in keeping with the law made by God, departed from this world; but as he went, he left behind with us many of his sayings in the form of memories, which can never be forgotten.

We have only heard of him from Mummy and Papa, heard of his love, but we never saw him — though we have certainly felt it. If only we too had met him, we would count ourselves fortunate. That we remained deprived of his love, his affection, and his blessing is our misfortune. But whenever we hear Baba ji's taped voice, it feels as though he is still right here with us.

Well... even if he is not here, his blessing is with us always and will remain so. In any case, he dwells deep within our minds and hearts, and in the shade of his values our family has always been full of happiness and peace.

• • •

Tribute

— Meenu

It was not my fortune to be able to see revered Babaji in person. Yes, I did get the opportunity to see and serve Ammaji. To them, my heartfelt tribute.

Through Subodh Bansal

• • •

Tribute

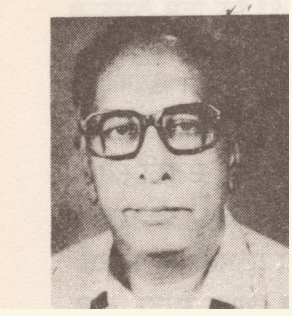
— Shalini

I was able to see Babaji and Dadiji only in photographs. But from what I have heard about Babuji from Sangeet and others, my head bows with reverence and respect.

Through Subodh Bansal

His Memory Was Extraordinary

— Chandravir Gupta



The very mention of the late Shri Dhanpat Rai ji Gupta seems to open a treasury of memories of my own past. He was my brother through my mother's side of the family. He lived in a large house situated in Jattiwada, Meerut — and it was to one part of that house that my revered mother and grandmother brought me in my childhood to study. Though he was my brother, in terms of age I was even younger than his children; yet there was never any lack of grace and affection in him, nor any pride in being older. Living together for nearly twelve years, I received his guidance and protection.

He was a lawyer by profession, but his passion was homeopathy. From morning until he left for the courts, he would sit in his chamber outside. He attended to few legal cases — he saw patients continuously, gave free medicines, and this routine went on. His intellect was extraordinary. He remembered by heart the medicines of every patient and the details of their illness. He never wrote a prescription on paper. He would get up repeatedly from his chamber, go inside the house, and prepare the medicines himself; on these occasions he never showed anger. This is the very reason that the families of police and officials of other departments too began coming to him from early morning among his patients. Among all classes he was known, with affection and reverence, not as the vakil saheb but by the name Dr. Dhanpat Rai. This was his service to humanity, and this was his worship and devotion. My salutations, again and again!

151, Bailuni Khandak

Lucknow – 226001

• • •

He Was 'Bhai Saheb' to Us All

— Ramesh Chandra Bansal

In Jattiwada, Meerut, was the house of Shri Jwala Prasad, Jiledar. He had two daughters — Sauhadra (married in Lawad, Meerut) and Smt. Chanda (married in Jisaula, Muzaffarnagar). In time both sisters became widows, and their children came to live in Meerut. The elder sister's four sons were Master Ganpat Rai, Shri Dhanpat Rai, Shri Birbal Prasad, and Shri Ratan Lal, and two daughters, Smt. Dhanvanti and Smt. Daya. The younger sister's three sons were Shri Disondi Ram, Shyam Sundar Lal, and Brijmohan Lal. She was my Tai (aunt).

After my father's death, when my elder brother and I came to this same house for our education, I saw all the brothers. Everyone was busy, but they sat together in joy and sorrow. Shri Dhanpat Rai was the eldest, so everyone called him 'Bhai Saheb.' I remember his daily routine even today. In the full and bustling family, he woke first of all. The others woke at the sound of his bucket in the bathroom. He was himself an example.

After that he would begin his work of service — giving free medicine. He kept the medicines in his room on the upper floor. He would ask about the health of patients and their attendants in the sitting room outside. Pressing the phials of medicine four at a time between his fingers, he would bring them down from the upper room, cross two courtyards, and go into the sitting room to give them out. This coming and going went on from morning to evening. In this same sitting room, his clerk (munshi) too would take advice on the legal papers. This very sitting room, which was his chamber, was also the drawing room and study room for everyone else.

He observed punctuality completely. I never saw him shout or grow angry. He was twenty years older than me, so I never had the courage to speak with him. His younger brother Ratan Lal was my classmate. I never saw him grow angry at all either. His wife, Bhabhi Prakash Vati ji, was very cheerful. In those days it was not the custom in the house for the younger to speak with the elderly, or the elder with the younger.

He took an interest in social work, and especially in the work of the community (biradari), of which he was the secretary in 1947; and he was the editor of 'Prakash' at a time when no one else was willing to do it. On his birth centenary, my reverent tribute with folded hands.

Bansal Bhavan

Ram Chowk, Roorkee

• • •

When He Said 'Goodbye' to the World

— Krishna Kumar Gupta

I count it my good fortune that I had the chance to see Mamaji, Shri Dhanpat Rai the lawyer, just a few moments before his final departure from the world. I remember clearly that at that time he raised both his hands up and, as it were, said goodbye to the world.

He was undergoing his treatment in Dehradun. The doctors diagnosed him with cancer. My elder brother, Colonel Devki Nandan Gupta, was also in Meerut at the time of his operation, and they too had told him it was cancer of the prostate. That is why he was getting his treatment in Dehradun, at his younger son's place.

He was an ideal for us, and he was rich in social service — Shri Dhanpat Rai.

60-A, Connaught Place

Dehradun – 248001

• • •

He Sought Justice Only for the Truth

— Ranjan Kumar

I was still young when I came into contact with Mausaji, Shri Dhanpat Rai ji. My elder sister Nirmala had been married into this family with simplicity, and I used to go to him in Meerut. The short-statured Mausaji would finish his work in the morning and go out for a walk. On return he would sit in the lower sitting room, where there was always a crowd of patients. He gave free medicines to everyone with great love. I would often take a white pill from him by saying 'my throat is sore,' because that sweet pill tasted very good to me in childhood. I would also wonder: what relief could this tiny pill bring to any sick person? But every day, again and again, I would see patients saying, Doctor Saheb, the last medicine has given some relief now — please give two more days' medicine.'

In his legal practice too, he was famous — for not taking on false cases. He sought justice only for the truth. This was his own service to society. In all this, Mausi ji too always cooperated — truth and honesty remained the chief aim of their life. All his sons received higher education and always respected him.

Where does one find people like this, of such a pure nature — someone's 'Doctor Saheb,' someone's 'Vakil Saheb,' and yet so like a father?

'Vardan'

Mohalla Diwan Parmanand
Najibabad – 246763

His Ancestors, Descendants, and Close Relatives

Maharaja Agrasen is regarded as the original founder of our Agrawal caste. This caste is considered foremost among the Vaishyas, of which the princely Agrawals are an important branch. Thus, the princely Agrawals have continued since the time of Maharaja Agrasen — some 5,000 years ago. Shri Nihal Chand ji has shed ample light on these facts in his book 'History of the Vaishya Agrawal Royal Lineage Society.' The Government of India issued a postage stamp in his memory on 24 September 1976. On this stamp his birth date is recorded as 'Ashwin Shukla Ekam.' This should leave no doubt regarding his historicity and greatness.

Maharaja Agrasen

Maharaja Agrasen was originally a Vaishya, who, while remaining a Vaishya, was honored with the title of Maharaja. Some historians also hold the view that Agrasen ji was born a Kshatriya and changed his varna to become a Vaishya.

He founded an Agra republic whose capital was Agrodak, or Agroha, which exists in the Hisar district of Haryana. He divided his republic into 18 parts, which were: Hisar, Hansi, Toshan, Sirsa, Narnaul, Rohtak, Panipat, Delhi, Jind, Kaithal, Meerut, Saharanpur, Jagadhri, Vidhinagar, Nabha, Amritsar, Alwar, Udaipur, among others. Thus, Maharaja Agrasen was perhaps the first person to lay the foundation of democratic rule and panchayati raj.

To establish the Agrawal lineage and for the governance of the republic, Maharaja Agrasen founded 18 gotras (clans). He gave each of his 18 representatives the name of one gotra, based on the names of their family priests. This arrangement was made for the purification of blood and for the flourishing of a good lineage. There was also a rule that marriage should not take place within the same gotra. One should marry only a girl who was five generations removed on the mother's side and seven generations removed on the father's side. A socialist rule was established whereby every family newly settling in his kingdom was given one brick and one gold coin by each family of the kingdom, and its observance was ensured. In his kingdom there was no poverty, because by receiving back one coin and one brick, a person would again come up to the common level.

His father is said to have been Maharaja Mahidhar. When Agrasen ji reached the age of 35, his father handed the kingdom over to him and departed to perform austerities. It is said that Maharaja Agrasen made the city of Agra his capital at the age of 40.

Shri Veerbhan

Legend has it that Maharaja Agrasen had two marriages, from which eighteen sons were born. The seventh son of Queen

Dhanpala was Veerbhan. He became a disciple of Sage Vashishta, whose family priests were the 'Bansal's. For this reason, Maharaja Agrasen ji gave his lineage the gotra 'Bansal.' Thus, Veerbhan was the founder of the Bansal-gotra Agrawals. The remaining Agrawals too were given 17 other gotras, each separately, after the names of their respective family priests.

Shri Veerbhan ji had two marriages — the first marriage was in Poornabas, to Chandra Devi, daughter of Raja Vijay Chandra; and the second marriage was to Gomanti Devi, the seventh daughter of Raja Vasak. From the first marriage one son, Jeet Singh, was born, and his descendants were called Rajvanshi. From the second marriage three sons were born, and they were called Vis Vanshi (Visa) Agrawal.

Very few descendants were born to these four sons of Veerbhan, but some historians surmise that their descendants are surely to be found among the Rajputs.

Raja Ratanchand

It is also necessary to mention Raja Ratanchand — descendant of Maharaja Agrasen and the pride of the princely Agrawal society — who was born in the town of Mirapur, tehsil Jansath, district Muzaffarnagar. In the year 1701 he was appointed treasurer to the Syed brothers in Jansath. Later he was appointed to the post of Diwan and honored with the title of Raja. He also had the authority to grant government employment. He took advantage of this and appointed Hindus to high posts and even had the jizya tax lifted from them. Without his consent, no major work was carried out. He was a skilled politician and a lover of justice, as well as a man of reformist views. He was opposed to the evil customs of the princely Agrawal society — the wasteful expenditures on occasions of birth, death, and marriage, such as garden festivities, fireworks, and dancing girls. He laid the foundation of a society based on progressive thinking. Those who agreed with him, and who obtained employment in the royal court, were numerous, and they came to be marked by the names 'Raja's Biradari' or 'Rajashahi,' though these people called themselves Rajvanshi.

Raja Ratanchand's administrative life (1712–1720) was very brief, and even in that period he remained entangled in administrative and political turmoil; later he was killed, trampled by an elephant. The firm pillar of social service and reform thus came crashing down.

Shri Sultan Singh

Some families of the Bansal gotra of the Rajashahi Biradari settled in the village of Lawad in Meerut district — among them the name of Shri Sultan Singh is foremost. In this village he acquired a large zamindari of land — including a mansion, courtyard and garden, fields, and so on. At that time, security arrangements in the villages were not complete. Some members of this family, in order

to frighten away unwanted elements, used to imitate the howling of wolves. For this reason, they came to be called 'Bhediya' (wolf). No photograph of him is available, but a photograph of his wife has been published.

Dr. Dhanpat Rai's Grandmother

Shri Sagarmal ji

His son was La. Sagarmal, who was renowned for wrestling not only throughout the village but in other villages as well. Whenever Babuji sat with us four brothers, he would speak of him with great pride, since he was, after all, his own father. In an interview recorded on tape, Babuji related that his father, Shri Sagarmal, was an extremely powerful man. He would even throw a full sack of wheat straight up from the ground to the roof above in just two or three jerks, since who would want the trouble of climbing the stairs? In this same vein, he related that once a wrestler from another village came and confronted him directly. He said: 'I have heard that in this village Sagarmal has a great name in wrestling — I have come to wrestle him hand to hand.' Sagarmal said, 'Yes, I am Sagarmal. I will call him right now. Until then, you do one thing.' Saying this, he picked up a piece of wood and, in a single motion, wedged it between two branches of a tree, and said to the wrestler, 'Until Sagarmal comes, you pull this piece of wood out.' The wrestler struggled with it, but even after great effort he could not pull the wedged wood free. When Sagarmal returned a little later, the wrestler was still shaking it back and forth. He took hold of the piece of wood and freed it from the tree in a single jerk. He said to the wrestler, 'I myself am Sagarmal — well, will you wrestle?' The visiting wrestler touched his feet, begged forgiveness, and went away.

Sagarmal, who was born into the zamindar family of Lawad, was married to Sauhadra Devi of Meerut (whose photograph is published). They had four sons and two daughters. The four sons were, in order: the eldest, Shri Ganpat Rai; Dhanpat Rai; Birbal Prasad; and Shri Ratan Lal Bansal. Among the daughters were Dhanvanti Devi and Smt. Daya Vati — Smt. Daya Vati is still with

her son in Dehradun. She was married to Shri Om Prakash ji of Mawana, and Smt. Dhanvanti Devi was married to Shri Kishori Lal ji, who was said to be from Rawalpindi.

Dr. Dhanpat Rai's Mother

La. Sagarmal ji, though extremely healthy, passed away relatively early. His four sons were Ganpat Rai, Dhanpat Rai, Birbal Prasad, and Ratan Lal. His second son was Shri Dhanpat Rai Gupta, whom he affectionately called 'Dhannu.'

Dr. Dhanpat Rai's Wife

Shri Ganpat Rai

The late Shri Ganpat Rai was their elder brother, whom Babuji greatly respected. In his presence Babuji would never open his mouth to argue. He was good-natured and cheerful, and whenever we forgot to say 'Namaste' on meeting him, he would himself remind us by saying 'Tauji, Namaste,' which became a lesson for the future. He was the head of the Art Department at Nanak Chandra High School (now a degree college) in Meerut. He passed away from prostate cancer. One of his daughters, Sharda, now lives in Ghaziabad. His other daughters, Shanti, Kunti, and Kamala, have passed away. His son, Shri Kailash Chandra Gupta, built his own

house in Delhi, located at 19-B, Sarvodaya Enclave, Delhi. He retired from a first-class post in central government service. He has one son and two daughters. His son, Sharad Chandra Gupta, runs a travel agency in Delhi. Shri Kailash ji's elder daughter, Sarita, was married to E. Ashok Kumar, who is in Rajasthan. The younger daughter, Seema, has settled with her family in America.

Shri Dhanpat Rai

Babuji's marriage to Shrimati Prakashvati, the younger daughter of Shri Jai Shri Ram ji of Muzaffarnagar, was solemnized on 1 December 1920. Shrimati Prakashvati remained with him throughout his life and passed away on 1 October 1994.

Shri Jai Shri Ram, who died in a railway accident, had three daughters and two sons. Of the remaining two daughters, Shrimati Asha Devi (married into Talada) and Shrimati Sita Devi (married into Meerut) are notable. Among the sons, Shri Visheshwar Dayal Goyal was a superintending engineer in the Irrigation Department. His younger brother, Shri Jagat, died in his youth. Shri B.D. Goyal himself has five daughters, who are happy within their own families.

Shri Goyal had two paternal cousins — Shri Kedar Nath Goyal and Shri Keshav Gupta. The late Shri Kedar Nath ji had three sons, who were, respectively: Air Vice Marshal Surendra Goyal; Shri Jitendra Nath Goyal, I.A.S.; and Devendra Goyal ('Munna'), a film producer. The late Shri Keshav Gupta was himself a renowned freedom fighter and revolutionary. His son, Shri Arun Gupta, is a social worker and writer, and was Deputy Director in the Information Department.

Shri Rajendra Kumar Bansal

Shri Sagarmal ji's second son was Shri Dhanpat Rai Gupta, who had four sons. The eldest, Shri Rajendra, lives in Chandausi, district Moradabad. There he was Head of the English Department at S.M. College. He has his own house in Chandausi and spends several months each year at the Arya Vanaprastha Ashram in Jwalapur. His wife, Smt. Haribala, has passed away. His son, Madhukar Bansal, is a lecturer at Bareilly College, whose subject, like his father's, is also English literature. Madhukar has one daughter — Gargi.

Shri Sukumar Bansal

The second son, Sukumar Bansal, is settled in Lucknow. He retired in 1986 from the post of Deputy Director in the Information and Public Relations Department and now leads a retired life. He still maintains an interest in reading and writing. His wife, Smt. Nirmala Bansal, is the daughter of a family from Najibabad. They have two sons — the elder, Neeraj Bansal, who is a senior production manager at a distillery in Patiala and lives happily with his two sons, Yash and Jai. The younger son, Navneet Bansal, is a

manager at the Times of India Group in Lucknow and has two daughters — Isha and Soumya. Both brothers, Neeraj and Navneet, married own sisters — Rekha and Kokil — from the same princely family.

Shri Sushil Bansal

Shri Dhanpat Rai ji's third son, Shri Sushil Kumar Bansal, took up American citizenship and settled in his own home there, though he visits India once a year. He went to America in 1977. He was present at the time of our revered mother, Shrimati Prakashvati's, passing, and took part in the final rites. His wife, Saroj Bala, is the daughter of the Kaushik family of Mawana. They have two children — son Ashish and daughter Shalini (Gudya). Both are employed there.

Shri Subodh Bansal

Babuji's youngest son, Shri Subodh, has built his own house in Dehradun, where he resides. He married Chitra, daughter of Shri Vedprakash ji, of Nangli village near Mawana. His career began in state government service, and he retired from a senior first-class post at the Indian Institute of Petroleum. He has two sons — Sameer and Sangeet. Sameer married into Roorkee, and Sangeet's wife is from Najibabad. Both brothers each have one daughter — Samridhi (Chhavi) and Trisha, respectively. Sameer is currently working abroad in Holland, and Sangeet is in the Income Tax Department. They live with their father in Dehradun.

The Late Shri Birbal Prasad

Babuji had two younger brothers — Shri Birbal Prasad and Shri Ratan Lal Bansal. The late Shri Birbal Prasad was married to Smt. Lilavati, of Harchandpur. They had three sons — the late Shri Shashi Kumar, Shri Aditya Kumar and Shri Sudhir Kumar. The late Shri Shashi Kumar died in an accident. His family lives in their own house in Shastrinagar. Shri Aditya Kumar retired and now lives in nearby Swamipara, Meerut. Shri Sudhir's family is also nearby Swamipara. He himself is still in service. Shri Birbal Prasad ji's one daughter, Radharani (Savitri), is in Delhi.

The Late Shri Ratan Lal Bansal

He passed away in Ghaziabad. He had retired from the post of manager at Allahabad Bank. He lived in New Kavi Nagar in Ghaziabad. He had two sons — Deepak and Pankaj Bansal — and two daughters — Geeta and Sangeeta. Both daughters, Geeta and Sangeeta, are settled with their families in Meerut and Ghaziabad respectively.

The Late Dhanvanti and Sushri Daya Vati

Babuji's sister, Shrimati Dhanvanti Devi, was married to Shri Kishori Lal ji. Their family had five sons and three daughters. Among the sons, the eldest, Colonel D.N. Gupta, has retired and lives in Rajnagar, Ghaziabad. The second son, Shri Krishna Kumar Gupta, who retired from the post of Deputy Director in the Department of Agriculture, lives in Connaught Place, Dehradun. The third son, Shri Yogendra Kumar Gupta, was a guard with the railways and lives in Agra. The other two sons, E. Surendra Kumar Gupta and E. Ashok Kumar Gupta, have served the governments of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan respectively. Shrimati Dhanvanti Devi's three daughters — Shail, Saroj, and Shashi — were married into families in Ghaziabad, Dehradun, and Mawana respectively. Saroj and Shashi have both passed away.

Shrimati Daya Vati lives in Dehradun with her son Munish. Her elder son, Chandra Shekhar, died in Ramraj, Meerut. Her daughter, Prabha, lives with her husband, Shri Veerendra Kumar Mittal, in their own house in Lucknow; he is an Audit Officer at the A.G.'s office. Munish is employed in Dehradun.

In addition to the above relatives and descendants of Babuji, there is a long list of other relatives and descendants, among whom may be mentioned: Dr. Om Prakash and Jaiprakash Goyal (sons of his father's sister); Shri Shyam Sundar Lal Rajvanshi (son of his mother's sister), who for many years served as the General Secretary of the All-India Sabha. The late Satish Prakash Garg (son of his father's sister), the late Dr. Ved Prakash Garg (son of his father's sister), and the late Shri Disondi Ram Gupta and the late Shri Brij Mohan Gupt (sons of his mother's sister) are also notable. Dr. Baljeet Singh Bansal, a renowned economist (Lucknow); Shri Ramesh Chandra Bansal (Roorkee); Shri Shiv Swaroop Gupta (Lucknow); Shri Ranjan Kumar (Najibabad); Shri Narendra Kumar and Upendra Kaushik (Mawana); and Shri Ved Prakash Nagliwale also deserve mention. In Lucknow, Shri Chandravir Gupta, a resident of Mandawar, is the son of his father's sister. It is not possible in this publication to write about everyone. It is also possible that some people have been inadvertently overlooked. We therefore express our words of apology, and with reverence and a bowed head before our elders, we welcome the affection of the generations to come.

This account is dedicated to the generation to come, with special remembrance of Yash, Isha, Jai, Gargi, Samridhi (Chhavi), Soumya, Priya, Pramita, Trisha, Maitrie and Tushar.

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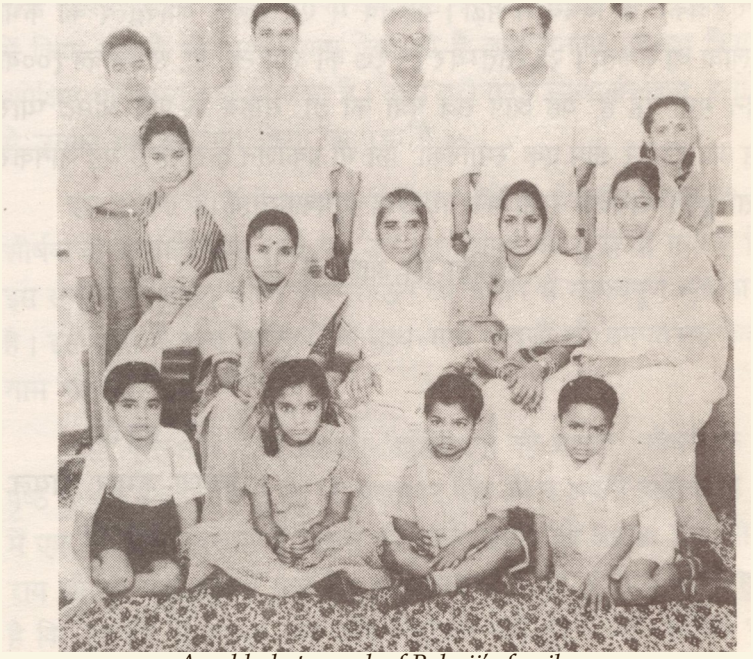
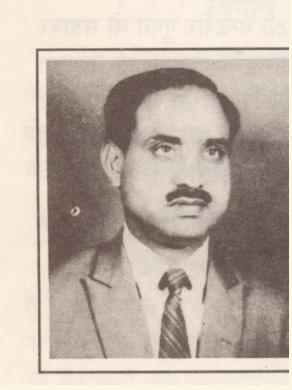


An old photograph of Babuji's family

Congratulations from the Rajvansh Sabha! Best wishes!

All India Vaishya Agrawal Rajvansh Sabha

(*Registered*)



General Secretary
567-68/2 Shastrinagar,
Meerut – 250004
Phone: 0121-765075
Date: 11.8.97

Dear Sir,

In the August 1997 issue of Samaj Jyoti, I read about your revered father, the late Dr. Dhanpat Rai Gupta, Advocate. Indeed, such a great personality can never be forgotten. On 26 September 1997 you are celebrating the late Doctor Sahab's 100th birthday — this is a testament to the undying love of all you sons for Doctor Sahab. I was pleased to learn that on this occasion you are also publishing a 'Smarika' (memorial volume). Congratulations and best wishes from the Rajvansh Sabha.

In hope of cooperation,

Yours sincerely,
Dinesh Kumar Goyal
General Secretary

The History of the Rajvansh Samaj and Babuji Dr. Dhanpat Rai Gupta

— Sukumar Bansal

Shri Nihal Chand ji, by writing the history of the Rajvansh Samaj, has certainly rendered great service to the Rajvansh Samaj. How can the edifice of the present stand without knowledge of one's past! From the womb of the past, the present is born, and from the present, the future. This is the law of nature. We therefore need accurate knowledge of our past in order to substantiate our sense of reverence for it. In this context, it would also be appropriate that this important document, published by the Akhil Bharatiya Vaishya Agrawal Sabha, should not become a cause of any misunderstanding.

In the aforesaid book, Babu Dhanpat Rai Gupta is mentioned three times in various contexts, and there is also one place where his mention was warranted but could not be made. So that the facts may become entirely clear, he is being referenced here for that very purpose.

In the 15th chapter of this book — titled 'Persons of the Rajvansh Samaj in Various Fields' — on page 160, a list is given of those eminent people who played an important role in organizing this community and running its institutions. In this list, alongside other individuals, the name of Babuji Shri Dhanpat Rai, Advocate, also appears.

In the same book's 11th chapter — titled 'Enumeration of Conferences' — on page 105, it is stated that Shri Bakhtawar Singh ji, in his table, has shown a 1947 conference in which Shri Jyoti Prasad is named as President and Shri Dhanpat Rai ji as Secretary. The historian, rejecting this, has said that 'no elections took place from 1942 to 1951.' He states: 'Therefore, no conference at the all-India level took place. It is possible that this was a conference of the local Meerut Sabha, at which the above-named individuals may have served as President or Secretary.' In this connection, an article published in the souvenir volume issued on the occasion of the Ghaziabad Sabha's conference, by Shri M.P. Singhal, President of the All India Vaishya Agrawal Rajvansh Sabha, has also been published. In this article too, a chronological account of the Rajvansh Sabha's conferences has been given, and it includes mention of a conference held in Meerut in 1947, at which Shri Jyoti Prasad ji was elected President and Shri Dhanpat Rai Secretary. Thus, not only Shri Bakhtawar Singh ji but Shri Singhal ji too has confirmed the 1947 conference. Several other individuals also confirm the 1947 conference. It would not be out of place if the aforesaid historian were kindly to reconsider this matter.

In this history, under the 10th chapter — titled 'The Formation of the Rajvansh Samaj and Its Activities' — on page 57, the following statement appears: 'As long as Shri Shyam Sundar Lal Rajvanshi continued to work, work continued to be done. After his

departure, Shri Dhanpat Rai Vakil became Secretary in Meerut. A slackness set in the work. To such an extent that the Sabha's work came to a complete halt. No action was taken to have the constitution passed by the Sabha registered with the Registrar's office, nor was the Sabha's annual report sent to the Registrar.' This quotation gives the impression, as it were, that this so-called slackness had some connection or relation with Babuji as well — which is an injustice to him.

The actual situation is that in April 1941, a new constitution and code of conduct (dastur-ul-amal) were passed. In addition, a dispute arose over inter-subcaste marriage, which split the community into two factions. The condition of the Sabha kept deteriorating. This very fact has been noted by the historian Shri Nihal Chand ji himself, in the second paragraph of page 57. He has said: 'Those gentlemen who were not satisfied with the decisions of the conference stopped taking interest in the Sabha's activities, and the condition of the Sabha kept worsening day by day.' The historian himself has again clarified the real reason for this deteriorated situation, on page 58 — 'Most people did not wish to remain bound by the code of conduct and penal code passed at the 1941 conference. For this reason, they stopped participating in the activities of the Rajvansh Sabha.'

Nor is this all — open violation of the code of conduct began to be committed, on occasions such as weddings, by the very pillars of the community. Babuji was a strong supporter of this code of conduct (dastur-ul-amal) and was in favor of its full implementation. He was therefore dissatisfied with the prevailing situation; nevertheless, he remained active until the year 1947, as is evident from the 1947 conference itself.

The writer of these lines was himself present at the aforesaid conference and was a witness there to the debate that took place and to Babuji's clearly stated views. He is also familiar with Babuji's state of mind — for he would often grow distressed at the open or 'underground' violations of the code of conduct that occurred at the weddings of prominent people, and would say: how can a tree flourish whose very roots are growing hollow? Perhaps this code of conduct was observed only by Prof. Sheetal Prasad ji and by my father, Shri Dhanpat Rai ji, on the occasion of my own wedding. I cannot recall any other example. Babuji was, at that time, in financial difficulty, since his three cinema halls had by then slipped out of his hands, and his income from legal practice was also thin at that time. That, even in this condition, he had the code of conduct observed must be called praiseworthy. In those days Babuji was in a despondent state of mind, and in his despondency, he grew, day by day, more distant from the active activities of the community.

Finally, attention must be drawn to one more omission in the aforesaid book, since because of it Babuji's contributions are not being correctly assessed. In the table given in Appendix 9 of this history, at serial number 37, the annual conference at Meerut in 1942 shows Dr. Suraj Bal as President and Shri Shyam Sundar Lal

Rajvanshi as Secretary. In this table there is no mention anywhere of Shri Dhanpat Rai. The historian himself has written, in accordance with the above, that after Shri Shyam Sundar Rajvanshi's departure, Shri Dhanpat Rai became Secretary — yet why is there no mention of him anywhere in this table? Mention is also found of his being chosen Secretary in the year 1947 as well, and yet his name is entirely absent from this table. Shri Shyam Sundar Lal Rajvanshi and Shri Dhanpat Rai ji lived together in the same residence, side by side, for sixty years. Shri Rajvanshi ji's selection occurred under an Emergency Commission in the army, and he had to leave. In his absence, Shri Dhanpat Rai ji conducted the work of the Sabha in the post of Secretary for several years.

In this perspective, would it not be proper if the historian were to reconsider the aforesaid facts, for the sake of a correct assessment?

• • •

A photograph of Babuji in his mature years

Friends Whom Only Death Could Part

This account would remain incomplete without mention of Babuji's intimate friends: Pt. Shyam Bihari Lal Shivpuri, Dr. Prayag Chandra, Shri Avtar Krishna Kaul, and Shri Gendan Lal, Advocate. Of these, regarding the late Pandit Shyam Bihari Lal Shivpuri, we have been able to obtain some information with the help of his daughter, Shrimati Prakash Vireshwar:

Pt. Shyam Bihari Lal came to Meerut in 1925 and began practicing law in Meerut; it was then that his acquaintance and closeness with Shri Dhanpat Rai ji grew. He passed away on 3 May 1954 from a heart attack.

In his family, there was complete trust in Shri Dhanpat Rai ji, and even in the most difficult illnesses, only 'Doctor Sahab' would be allowed into the house.

Pandit Shivpuri ji suffered from high blood pressure in 1935, and in 1948 he also suffered a heart attack; even then 'Doctor Sahab' kept telling him — 'Listen to me, I will make you well.' But he did not listen — he neither gave up smoking nor gave up his fondness for rich food. In the end, Doctor Sahab sat beside his friend and wept, saying only this — 'If only he had listened to what I said.'

The renowned Dr. Prayag Chandra ji practiced in Meerut and was Babuji's companion every evening at the Bridge table. Shri Avtar Krishna Kaul worked in the Police Department and was full of humane qualities. Shri Gendan Lal ji was a colleague in legal practice and held Babuji's convictions in high regard. He and Babuji got along extremely well.

Babuji's Family Tree

Family Unit — Rajendra Bansal

Name	Address	Birth Date	Marriage Date
1. Rajendra Bansal	Madhuvan, Subhash Marg, Rani Ka Bag, Chandausi, Dist. Moradabad, U.P. Phone: 05924/50543	18.2.1924 (Meerut)	23.11.1948 (Bijnaur)
2. Haribala	—	14.11.1927 (Bijnaur)	as above (deceased 15.11.94)
3. Madhukar Bansal	as above	12.6.1953	23.2.1981
4. Vibha Bansal	as above	—	23.2.1981
5. Gargi	as above	6.12.1986	—
6. Chitra Dayal	16, U.P.S.I. D.C., Nawabganj, Kanpur. Phone: 0512/542951	31.8.1950	15.4.1968
7. Dineshwar Dayal	as above	23.11.1941	15.4.1968
8. Sudhanshu Dayal	as above	8.7.1970	—
9. Himanshu Dayal	as above	23.11.1973	—

Family Unit — Sukumar Bansal

Name	Address	Birth Date	Marriage Date
1. Sukumar Bansal	Purana Quila, near Railway Crossing, Lucknow-226001. Phone: 0522/215408	16.5.1927 (Lawad)	26.6.1951 (Najibabad)
2. Nirmala Bansal	as above	28.2.1934	26.6.1951

3. Neeraj Bansal	40, Manshaiya Colony, 21, Phatak, Patiala. Phone: 226088	4.2.1953 (Meerut)	1.2.1981 (Lucknow)
4. Rekha Bansal	as above	18.5.1955	1.2.1981
5. Yash Bansal	as above	3.10.1982 (Lucknow)	—
6. Jai Bansal	as above	9.3.1987 (Lucknow)	—
7. Navneet Bansal	Purana Quila, near Railway Crossing, Lucknow-226001. Phone: 0522/215408	15.2.1955 (Fatehgarh)	16.3.1983 (Lucknow)
8. Kokil Bansal	as above	8.3.1960 (Allahabad)	as above
9. Isha Bansal	as above	13.6.1984 (Lucknow)	—
10. Soumya Bansal	as above	29.8.1991 (Lucknow)	—

Family Unit — Sushil Bansal

Name	Address	Birth Date	Marriage Date
1. Sushil Bansal	6106 Walnut Street, Temple Hills, MD 20748, USA. 301-630-9335	6.10.1933	25.12.1958 (Mawana)
2. Saroj Bansal	as above	14.9.1937 (Mawana)	as above
3. Shalini Bansal McLeod	122 Swinley Forest, Williamsburg, VA 23188, USA Phone: 12028530964	27.11.1959 (Meerut)	25.09.2005 (America)
4. Christopher McLeod *	as above	30.01.1955	as above
5. Ashish Bansal	6106 Walnut Street, Temple Hills, MD 20748, USA	3.1.1964 (Meerut)	28.11.1992 (America)

6. Gauri Bansal	as above	18.10.1969	as above
7. Priya Bansal	as above	16.11.1993	—
8. Pramita Bansal *	as above	??	--

Family Unit — Subodh Bansal

Name	Address	Birth Date	Marriage Date
1. Subodh Bansal	44, East Canal Road, Dehradun-248001. Phone: 0135.651306	27.3.1935 (Lawad)	25.11.1960 (Meerut)
2. Chitra Bansal	as above	29.3.1943	as above
3. Sameer Bansal	H.N. Post & Zonen, Boezemweg 31, 2641 KG Pijnacker, The Netherlands	21.4.1962 (Meerut)	10.2.1989 (Roorkee)
4. Meenu Bansal	Ceder 25, Hoorn NH 1628 M.G., The Netherlands Phone: 31619802577	12.11.1968	as above
5. Samridhi Bansal	Address: as above Phone: 31644978142	14.11.1990 (Dehradun)	—
6. Maitrie Bansal *	Address: as above Phone: 31640945369	28.07.2000 (Hoorn, The Netherlands)	--
7. Sangeet Bansal	44 E.C. Canal Road, Dehradun-248001	1.1.1968 (Bijnaur)	6.12.1994 (Dehradun)
8. Shalini Bansal	as above	2.11.1971 (Dehradun)	as above
9. Trisha Bansal	as above	25.10.1995 (Dehradun)	—
10. Tushar Bansal *	as above	??	--

* New additions to the family since the original was published.

Family Members Whose Photographs Do Not Appear Elsewhere in This Publication

The late Haribala

Madhukar — Vibha

Himanshu — Sudhanshu — Dineshwar Dayal

Dinesh

Chris

Gauri

Samridhi (Chhavi)

Maitrie

• • •

In Dehradun, with wife and sons

Babaji: A Life of Quiet Devotion

Dr. Dhanpat Rai Gupta — my Babaji — was born on September 26, 1898, in Lawad village, Meerut district, into a landowning family where higher education was considered unnecessary. He wanted it anyway, earning his B.A. and LL.B. from Allahabad University and building a legal career. But medicine called to him too: in 1927 he earned the highest homeopathic degree of his time, and for sixty years he ran a free clinic out of his own home, seeing patients every morning before court and again in the evenings, all at no charge — medicines included. People came from far beyond Meerut, and it is said he helped cure illnesses even doctors had given up on.

He never chased money. What he built instead was a reputation for showing up — for patients, for family, for anyone who needed him. He was extraordinary in the guise of ordinary: a man who brought samosas to my school when an examination ran late, who quit smoking the instant he saw his son with a cigarette, who filled Diwali nights with fireworks pulled from his hiding places. We grandchildren pulled the cord of his sitting-room fan while he worked, and watched the line of patients that formed from the moment he sat down each morning.

Family members and contributors to this book remember him as famous for a temper that flared fast and cooled just as quickly. I lived alongside him for nearly eighteen years and witnessed it only once — the day Ammaji pleaded with him to stop cycling so far each morning to fetch milk, worried for his safety. He threw the pot down so hard it became family legend. Otherwise, in nearly two decades under the same roof, I never saw him truly angry.

But it is his selflessness I remember most, and the lesson it taught me. When I first left for the United States as a young woman, heartbroken and homesick, he wrote to me: "Come back, if possible. I will do anything to have you back home." Years later, gravely ill and living out his final months in Dehradun far from his beloved Meerut, he learned that I wanted to return to be at his side. This time he wrote something else entirely: "Please listen to me, beti. It will pain me more than make me happy if you came. You have to finish your studies. Coming back will destroy your future. I will try to be here when you all return in a year and a half." He was far from certain he would live to see that day. He tried anyway, through tremendous pain, for the chance to reunite

with his children once more. He did not get that chance. But he left me with something lasting — proof that loving someone fully sometimes means choosing their future over your own longing to hold them close.

In his final year, weakened by an illness that may well have been misdiagnosed, he was still picking up a pen to write to me — steady no longer, but present. His last letters are dated April 1980.

Sixty years of free medicine, a law practice on the side, an extraordinary love for his family, compassion for those who needed him, a firm belief in honesty, and a love strong enough to say don't come back — that was Babaji.

— Shalini (Gudya), 2026

This account was written with the assistance of AI.

Faces from Our Family

Babaji — a studio portrait, probably the 1920s or 1930s

Ganpat Rai — Babaji's eldest brother

Ratan Lal — Babaji's youngest brother

Daya Vati — Babaji's youngest sister

No photograph could be found of Birbal Prasad, the third of the four brothers, or of Dhanvanti Devi, the elder of the two sisters.

Ammaji with her elder sister Asha Devi — Vijaynagar, Meerut, around 1976

Babaji and Ammaji, a happy time — Gali 5, Thaparnagar, Meerut, probably 1970–71

Sukumar Tauji, at right, shaking hands with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at a political meeting he had arranged

Kailash Tauji and Sharda Taiji — Adelphi, Maryland, early 1980s. Son of Ganpat Rai, Kailash Tauji was the eldest of Papa's generation, and did not like being called a cousin — only the oldest brother.

A happier time — standing, from left: Neeraj and Navneet Bhaiya, Nirmala Taiji and Gudya; seated, Babaji and Ammaji. Gali 6, Thaparnagar, Meerut, 1969

The Last Days

प्रभात

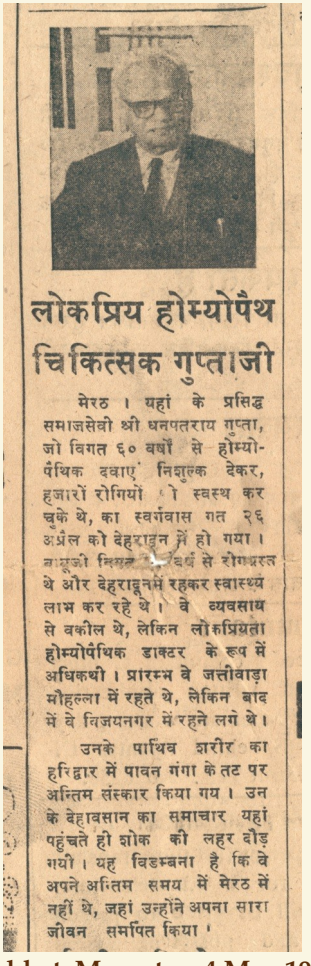
पगड़ी की रस्म

हमारे पूज्य पिताजी श्री धनपत राय गुप्ता (वकील) का स्वर्गवास २६ अप्रैल को देहरादून में हो गया। पगड़ी की रस्म २ मई को मध्यांह २ बजे ४४, ईस्ट कैनाल रोड, देहरादून में होगी।

राजेन्द्र कुमार बंसल
सुकुमार बंसल
सुशील कुमार बंसल
सुबोध कुमार बंसल

Prabhat, Meerut — 1 May 1980

The Pagdi Ceremony. Our revered father, Shri Dhanpat Rai Gupta (Advocate), passed away on 26 April in Dehradun. The pagdi ceremony will be held on 2 May at two in the afternoon at 44 East Canal Road, Dehradun. — Rajendra Kumar Bansal, Sukumar Bansal, Sushil Kumar Bansal, Subodh Kumar Bansal



लोकप्रिय होम्योपैथ चिकित्सक गुप्ताजी

मेरठ । यहां के प्रसिद्ध समाजसेवी श्री धनपतराय गुप्ता, जो विगत ६० वर्षों से होम्योपैथिक दवाएं निशुल्क देकर, हजारों रोगियों को स्वस्थ कर चुके थे, का स्वर्गवास गत २६ अप्रैल को देहरादून में हो गया। बाबूजी कुछ वर्ष से रोगग्रस्त थे और देहरादून में रहकर स्वास्थ्य लाभ कर रहे थे। वे व्यवसाय से वकील थे, लेकिन लोकप्रियता होम्योपैथिक डाक्टर के रूप में अधिकथी। प्रारम्भ वे जत्तीवाड़ा मोहल्ला में रहते थे, लेकिन बाद में वे विजयनगर में रहने लगे थे।

उनके पार्थिव शरीर का हरिद्वार में पावन गंगा के तट पर अन्तिम संस्कार किया गय। उन के देहावसान का समाचार यहां पहुंचते ही शोक की लहर दौड़ गयी। यह विडम्बना है कि वे अपने अन्तिम समय में मेरठ में नहीं थे, जहां उन्होंने अपना सारा जीवन समर्पित किया।

Prabhat, Meerut — 4 May 1980

The Beloved Homeopathic Physician Guptaji. Meerut. Shri Dhanpatray Gupta, the well-known social worker of this city, who for the past sixty years had given homeopathic medicines free of charge and restored thousands of patients to health, passed away on 26 April in Dehradun. Babuji had been unwell and had been staying in Dehradun to recover his health. He was a lawyer by profession, but his renown was greater as a homeopathic doctor. At first he lived in Jattiwada mohalla, and later moved to Vijaynagar.

His mortal remains were cremated at Haridwar on the bank of the holy Ganga. As soon as news of his passing reached here, a wave of grief ran through the city. It is a cruel irony that in his last days he was not in Meerut, to which he had devoted his whole life.

In his loving memory:

Letters from my Grandparents
https://archive.org/details/all-letters

NASH Homeopathy Foundation
https://homeopathy.org/nash-foundation/scholarships/

Until life's flower wilted, he continued to love flowers

जीवन पुष्प मुरझाने तक वे
फूलों से प्यार करते रहे